

V. Service Providers and Roles

A. Professional Certification

All professional staff members who will be providing direct service to children and families, employed directly or indirectly by an Early Intervention program (including salaried, contract/fee for services, or consultant/subcontract), are certified as Early Intervention Specialists by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health prior to billing for Early Intervention services.

All staff new to the field of early intervention in Massachusetts, who work 20 hours or more per week in a Massachusetts EI program, are required to attend and participate in a two-day orientation training offered by the Department of Public Health's Training Center vendor. It is recommended that all new staff to the Massachusetts system participate in this training, completing both days by the end of their first year of employment.

Primary program administrators, usually Program Director or Program Coordinator, meet the credentialing requirements for one of the disciplines listed in Section B below. The primary program administrator is required to apply for Early Intervention Program Director certification within three years of hire to that position. Further description may be found in Section XII, Program Administration, of these standards.

Certification for Early Intervention Specialists:

- a. Provisional certification is granted through the Department of Public Health to staff who meet entry level requirements and work in EI.
- b. Provisional certification with advanced standing (PCAS) is granted through the Department of Public Health to graduates of DPH-approved higher education programs in early intervention after satisfactory review of completed application and transcripts. Application for full certification must be completed within 3 three years from the date the PCAS is issued.
- c. Full certification is granted through the Department of Public Health after satisfactory completion of the EI certification process. Application must be completed by the end of 3 years of employment for those working 20 hours or more per week at one or more MDPH-certified EI program(s). Those working fewer than 20 hours per week are also encouraged to apply for full certification.
- c.1. Therapy Assistants are exempt from the requirement of full certification.

The following are the requirements for full certification as a certified Early Intervention Specialist:

1. For staff with provisional certification:

- a. submission of a portfolio documenting competencies as an Early Intervention Specialist within three years of employment in an MDPH certified Early Intervention program.
 - b. confirmation of at least 1440 hours of employment, working at least 20 hours per week.
- 2. For staff with provisional certification with advanced standing:
 - a. completion of 1440 hours of supervised employment in a MDPH-certified early intervention program.
 - b. Submission of the appropriate application for full certification.

B. Early Intervention Credentials

MDPH-certified EI programs must demonstrate a commitment to respond to the diversity of families in their communities. Staff should, to the extent possible, reflect the cultural, ethnic and linguistic background of families served. The following are the minimum credentials for entry level provisional certification as an Early Intervention Specialist:

1. As Developmental Specialist:
 - a) A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a major or concentration in infants and toddlers (includes early intervention and early childhood education), and at least 300 hours of practicum or work experience with young children. Experience with infants, toddlers and families is preferred.
 - b) A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a major or concentration in child development or child studies, and at least 300 hours of practicum or work experience with young children. Experience with infants, toddlers and families is preferred.
 - c) A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a major or concentration in education or special education, and at least 300 hours of practicum or work experience with young children. Experience with infants, toddlers and families is preferred.
 - d) A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution, with at least 300 hours of practicum or work experience with young children. Experience with infants, toddlers and families is preferred.

For a, b, c, and d, transcripts of degree work or subsequent transcripts must reflect successful completion of at least 4 approved three-credit courses that focus on infants, toddlers, and families.

2. In Nursing: Current licensure as a Registered Nurse by the Massachusetts Board of Registration, Division of Professional Licensure.

3. In Occupational Therapy: Current licensure as an Occupational Therapist by the Massachusetts Board of Registration of Allied Health Professions.

4. In Physical Therapy: Current licensure as a Physical Therapist by the Massachusetts Board of Registration of Allied Health Professions.

5. In Social Work: Current licensure as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.

(LCSW) or as a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW) by the Massachusetts Registry of Social Work.

6. In Psychology: A master's degree from an accredited institution in

- (a) counseling psychology
- (b) clinical psychology
- (c) developmental psychology
- (d) educational psychology

Or

- (e) Current licensure as a Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) by the Massachusetts Board of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professions.
- (f) Current licensure as a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) by the Massachusetts Board of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professions.

7. In Speech and Language Pathology:

- (a) Current licensure by the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Speech-Language Pathology and a Certificate of Clinical Competence (CCC) granted by the American Speech, Language and Hearing Association or
- (b) currently in clinical fellowship prior to being granted a CCC.

8. Specialty Provider: Early Intervention services may also be provided by qualified personnel who bring specific expertise necessary for working with populations including, but not limited to, children with low incidence conditions and their families. A Specialty Provider may be granted limited provisional certification as an Early Intervention Specialist that does not include the capacity to function as a Service Coordinator. Qualification is based on applicable state requirements for the profession or discipline in which the person is providing early intervention services.

9. Therapy Assistant: Current licensure from the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Allied Health Professions as an Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA), Physical Therapy Assistant (PTA); or from the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Speech Language Pathology/Audiology as a Speech Language Pathology Assistant. The scope of participation of a Therapy Assistant includes work with children and families, under close supervision and in accordance with the appropriate Board of Registration for specific disciplines. The role of the Therapy Assistant is to support the provision of IFSP services. Please refer to the Board of Registration for supervision, documentation, billing and scope of practice rules and regulations. Therapy Assistants are not required to attain Full Certification as Early Intervention Specialist because of the limitations on scope of practice regulated by their Professional Boards.